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EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION AT THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE; A CASE STUDY by STANSFIELD TURNER

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EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION AT THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

1972-1974

A CASE STUDY

The purpose of this paper is to describe the process of innovation and education at the Naval War College from 1972 to 1974. It is not to support or advertise what was done, but rather to examine how it was done, what opposition was encountered and what lessons were learned.

After I received my assignment as President of the Naval War College in February 1972, I had about 5 months to prepare myself for these new responsibilities before actually assuming them. (For four of those months I did this as an off duty function.) The first question I sought to answer was "What should one teach at a War College?" In short, what does a mid-career military officer need to learn in order to improve his effectiveness and productivity. In essence, this really amounted to asking the question, "What is the objective in having a War College?"

To proceed in this direction I asked a small group of respected educators, industrialists, bureaucrats, and naval officers to join me in Washington for a one day conference. This included the Presidents of two of our major universities,

the presidents of two major corporations who do business with the military, five men who held top level positions in the State Department, Department of Defense, and the National Security Council and were now in academic posts, and one junior and one senior naval officer with what I consider to be progressive outlooks. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Zumwalt, agreed to join with us for an hour of this conference. During the conference I asked the participants to discuss what they believe were the strengths and weaknesses of mid-career military officers. Out of this discussion I began to see several objectives for a War College:

1. To reduce the excessive conformity of thought which military officers exhibit by exposing them to a wide diversity of ideas.

2. To counteract the narrowness of viewpoint which many military officers evidence. In particular, the military-industrialist who were present pointed out that in their view military officers were usually out of touch by six months or a year with trends in the country; that they never quite appreciated that the changes they made to their hardware cost money; and they really were oblivious to the fact that industry must make a profit in order to continue servicing them.

3. That there was a vast scope of factual information worth transmitting to these students. Each time some member of the group proposed another subject that was of undoubted value to these students, one of our group kept bringing us back to the issue of why we wanted to transmit that rather than something else. It became readily apparent that it would be impossible to update these officers on all of the factual things with as disparate futures as a War College class would encounter. The idea, therefore, emerged that developing a method of thinking or way of approaching problems was a more suitable objective for mid-career military education.

4. Overall the first step in any innovation appears to me to be establishment of one's objectives and this conference clearly helped me to set such an objective.

A second step in innovation is to assess what the existing situation is, and then to match that against the objective. In taking a thorough look at the War College program in existance I found the following points which did not appear to be in line with the basic objective I had established:

1. A review of the syllabus showed that there were literally hundreds of subjects covered. Every Navy community was represented: Anti-submarine warfare, anti-air warfare, submarines,

intelligence, oceanography, etc. I attributed this to historical circumstance. Prior to World War II the objective of the Naval War College was to teach officers how to beat the Japanese fleet. In the immediate post WW II era the entire military establishment became increasingly aware of the interaction between military considerations and diplomatic and political. The scope of the War College program was extended to include substantial emphasis on international relations. Beyond that, every year from then on something new was added to the curriculum due to the pressures or the vogue of the day. There came a time when Balance of Payments was now something of interest to the military; there came a time when the planning programming and budgeting system was the latest innovation; there came a time when multi-polarity was replacing bi-polarity as the current terminology; etc. It appeared to me that each time a new topic such as these was added to the curriculum only a smaller slice of something was removed. The result was a course constructed by accretion and one that lacked discernable form. There was really no hope that so many subjects could be covered in an adequate manner.

• Decision: Therefore, it appeared to me that we should reduce the diversity of subject matter and teach a fewer number of subjects but teach them each in depth. Basically this required

a commitment to leaving things out of the curriculum that would be worth the students studying. It would take a conscious deliberate and sutbborn policy to do this.

Another characteristic of the existing course is that it was very much oriented towards current events. The emphasis on international relations had developed into a concern for covering the contemporary international picture. This included the outlook and prospects for United States foreign policy with regard to various areas of the world and the particular conditions extant in various countries and areas. The problem with this approach is that if the material were in fact current it must also be time sensitive. Therefore the value to student would appear to be short lived.

Decision: This led to a concept of constructing a course that would be of more permanent value to the student, a course that should bring about a fundamental improvement in the officer's capability rather than a one time updating. This again would require a deliberate and stubborn policy of resisting pressures and tendencies to concentrate on items of near term value.

In the previous school year there were over 170 outside lecturers who visited the campus. You cannot design a course around such a series of guest speakers over whose lecture content you have no control. You never will know what the course is going to be from year to year under these circumstances. As

a concomitant to this, in addition, the minds of the faculty need not be engaged under these circumstances. The faculty were in fact, constructing curricula, and then recruiting and administering the visitor who would teach those curricula. The end result was a dearth of intellectual stimuli on the campus inself.

Decision: If the basic objective is to improve the officer's thinking process, the stress on lectures should be reduced in favor of more reading and writing on the part of the individual student. Concomitantly, we must establish a high grade in-house capability to teach.

The existing program included several field trips for the students. One of these was to the United Nations in New York, and another to the Royal College of Defence Studies in London. Each of these was expensive in both dollars and time. It was not clear to me why either the United Nations or Great Britain were particular subjects on which to focus at this particular time and in this particular course. How did they reinforce what the War College was attempting to teach? Were they really necessary, or could the time and money be better employed in other ways?

Decision: The benefits of field trips did not appear to be worth the cost particularly in the student's time. They were to be eliminated and the money employed for purchasing books which the students would utilize and then retain.

There was an extracurricular master's degree program in association with George Washington University. This program clearly competed for the time of those students who enrolled in it (approximately 50% of the student body). There was little doubt that when faced by a conflict between two masters, the student opted to serve the one who granted a sheepskin. If this George Washington program was needed to prop up the Naval War College academic program, then the Naval War College was not doing its job, particularly for the 50% of the students who were not enrolled in the George Washington exercise. Beyond all this, the Navy has about three times as many officers with Master's degrees in International Affairs as it has reason to employ. The question arose as to why we were encouraging more.

Decision: In view of the questionableness of this program and yet its popularity, the decision was made to conduct a controlled experiment during the first year of the new program. One of the two colleges would be permitted to continue the associated degree program, while the other would not. At the same time, the Naval War College program, in both colleges, would be strengthened and made more demanding for the students. At the end of this experimentation period, it was clear that only exceptional students could meet the demands of both courses. Unfortunately, there was no way to select those who could carry both work loads at the beginning of the year when it was necessary to select these students.

The top officers in their respective year groups were not clamoring to be assigned to the Naval War College. Instead they were looking for "career-enhancing" assignments, usually in the Washington arena.

• Decision: It would be necessary to encourage the Bureau of Naval Personnel to assign its better officers to the War College. This did not appear, however, to be a long term solution. Only by making the course more attractive so that it would "pull" officers to it could we expect to attract the better officers over time. It appeared that the "attractiveness" of the present course was in some degree founded on a lack of academic pressure. This presented the challenge do me of making the course more academically demanding and yet more attractive to the individual student. Clearly this meant that the course had to have a discernable payoff in terms of improved capability for performance in the individual officer.

Having established an objective and basic procedures, the next step in innovation was to develop a curriculum to fulfil these requirements. I attempted this gradually over the five month period through conferences with educators, military officer, and people familiar with the bureaucratic process in the Department of Defense. It appeared to me that naval officers at mid-career needed enhanced improvement of their ability to approach a problem in three distinct areas: Broad national strategy; the allocation of resources in defense; and the

employment of naval forces tactically. Since the basic objective was to improve methods of approaching problems and making decisions, I opted to concentrate on a case study approach. The objective here was to get away from the excessive conformity of thought and narrowness of viewpoint by utilizing case studies that would bring out numerous equally "correct" solutions to any given problem. To avoid the pitfalls of emphasis on contemporary data, I decided to emphasize the historical approach to these case studies. In the case of strategy this might have meant going as far back as Thucydides and looking at various cases in strategic decision making. In resource allocation or defense economics it meant looking at recent, but generally completed, decisions in the assignment of dollars or manpower. In tactics it meant looking at largely hypothetical cases with some historical accent also. We were able to shape-up the case studies in strategy before I reported aboard and even to order many of the textbooks. Only the board shape of the Defense Economics course had evolved, and even less of the Tactics course. Thus the decision was made to phase in the new program sequentially with the Strategy course commencing in September, the Defense Economics course in December, and the Tactics course in April.

What, though, were the risks of innovating in this abrupt a manner? Certainly any innovator must weigh his expected risks against the expected benefits. I saw the following:

- There was clear danger that we would not be able to define the new program in time.

- There was a danger that we would not be able to find the right people to teach the new program. Could we actually put a team together which would implement it on such a short order?

- Would we be able to sell the new program to the "powers that be"?

- What were the dangers if the new program were a flop? Could the Naval War College's reputation survive?

Ninety percent of the incumbents at the War College advised me that it could not be done in time: We could not get the faculty; we could not get the books and materials that would be required; we could not get the lecturers committed; we could not get the printing done; we could not mold the faculty into a team properly etc. At the same time I looked at two of the plusses that I had going for us. One was that Admiral Zumwalt had given me his full support and encouragement to make the changes I saw fit. I would like to add that he not only did this in advance of my arrival at the War College, but throughout the first year of this new experiment supported the program unstintingly. I am well aware the he received numerous phone calls, letters, and other forms of complaint as to what I was doing. During that year he never passed any of these to me to prepare the response or to justify my position. He shouldered that burden entirely himself, and shielded me as much as was humanly possible from such opposition.

Secondly, my immediate superior, Vice Admiral Chris Cagle, Chief of Naval Education and Training also gave me his total support including the authority to deal directly with Admiral Zumwalt on matters of educational substance. Both of these forms of support were utterly essential to the outcome.

In making the innovation happen, perhaps the most critical decision was whether to proceed in a gradual and piecemeal fashion or to do it in what I would term a blitzkrieg manner. I decided that if we wanted to accomplish a major change that we had to use the Blitzkrieg approach rather than a gradual one. I felt that I would be absorbed by the educational bureaucracy of Newport if we attempted to introduce the program over a period of time. I thought the program would consequently become watered down. There would be a real danger of having the worst of both possible worlds. This decision to make a frontal approach in a Blitzkrieg manner is certainly one of the most controversial that I had to take. It inexorably led to certain other actions on my part. One of these was a decision to break down the established heirachy and organization. I did this both to get my own people into the key jobs and to get control of the program. The actual technique was to shift from an organization of the College into two subdivisions, the senior course and the junior course, with a naval officer in charge of each. Instead we established three academic departments with control over all of the teaching resources. We gradually stripped the two college directors

of their assets and turned their functions into the equivalent of being Deans of Students. The organization is actually more logical and in line with normal academic procedures. I took it, however, not for organizational efficiency, but in order to establish control over the new program. It just did not appear feasible to get the same "old dogs" to perform "new tricks" in the same organizational environment as before.

Secondly, the blitzkrieg approach almost forced me into more personal control over the new program than was desirable. I found it necessary to oversee and to approve all conception mechnical and administrative aspects as they developed. Initially this may have been necessary and satisfactory in the long run one of the great strengths of the new program was in allowing the faculty to gain a sense of responsibility and stake in the program.

Thirdly, the blitzkrieg approach naturally attracted attention not only in the Navy but in the other military services. We were therefore pushed into an active public relations program to explain our rational for the changes. Much of the criticisms we received was based on incomplete or incorrect information. I spend a great deal of time on personal communication with key flag officers both active and retired, previous Naval War College supporters and many others. We established an open door policy with the press to encourage a fair look at what we are doing. Due to the amount of resistance that developed, it appeared to me that being totally forthright, and opening

the doors to show what we were doing, would be the only way to eliminate doubt and suspicion in the long run.

Where did these resistances come from? Basically there were five different groupings:

o There were special interest groups. Most of these felt that their particular area of expertise or concern was being neglected. For instance, quite a few civilian international lawyers took exception to the fact that "International Law Week" was disestablished. International Law was factured into the case studies instead, loosing its individual identification. It also terminated the tradition of bringing a series of international lawyers to the campus for International Law Week. These lawyers called upon the Secretary of the Navy; wrote the Secretary of the Navy and took other steps to decry the new program without so much as preparing their case by asking us what we were doing instead. The only way to counter this was to be patient, to meet with as many of these people as I could, and to write to as many as we could. There were subcomponents of the Navy who felt that there particular area of concern was also being neglected. Throughout the entire two years here I have found it necessary about once a quarter to respond to a letter from a 3 or 4 star flag or general officer as to why his particular area is not being specifically covered by a separate course of study. It is amazing how many people in the military look at the 450 military officers who are assembled for 10 months

at the War College and view this as a great opportunity to indoctrinate them into one thing or another.

o There were of course alumni and friends of the War College who regreted seeing any substantial change. Some of these were influential civilians who advise and support top people in the Navy. Some were junior officers that were placed in spots as executive assistants and military aides. Some, of course, more senior officers, probably some of the 170 who are no longer inivted to lecture at the War College. About all we could do with this opposition was again to be patient, to give a little here and there, and to ride it out. Basically I hoped that as our graduates began to go back to the fleet they would carry the message with them that the course was beneficial. Beyond that, we developed the Annual Report which was an effort to explain the new program and we attempted to insure distribution of this to the principal opponents, as well as the friends of the new program.

There was considerable opposition from the Retired Flag Officer community. In essence, I diagnosed this as being more opposition to Admiral Zumwalt and not necessarily to the program itself. I tried to communicate with those who were most skeptical. Beyond that, there was little we could do, besides again being patient.

There was considerable opposition within the faculty of the War College itself. This ranged from downright opposition and attempts to sabotage the program to expres-

sions of discontent that were very disturbing to the students. The oppostion focused in two areas that easily could have been anticipated. First was the pressure for more contemporary focus and then pressure for more completeness in what we were doing. We worked around this opposition in part by shuffling people into different jobs where they were not as close to the students.

Finally, there was opposition from within the student body themselves. This can hardly be blamed on them or unanticipated. Any precipitate change in direction from what a student expected when he received his orders to the War College was naturally viewed with suspicion. Within the students there was particular pressure to place more emphasis on the contemporary scene. These students are very much concerned with their next assignment and their performance in that assignment. We employed several techniques to understand and minimize this student opposition if possible. Once a month, I met with any students who would like to express their opinions on the course or any other subject. We distributed questionnaires at the end of each sub-section of the course and at the end of the year. I read each of these carefully and responded in writing to all of the end-of-the-course questionnaires. I wrote personally to the students six months after they graduated. I explained the changes we had made as a result of their questionnaires and solicited further comments. As these comments have come in

we have been pleased to note that quite a few of them expressed a feeling that the course is proving of value to them though they were skeptical or opposed to the program when they graduated.

What, then, have been the results? It is unequivocal that the blitzkrieg has succeeded. The new course is in effect. It is working. It is working well. The second crop of students are particularly enthusiastic about it, having arrived under no misapprehension as to what they could expect. This is not to make an evaluation on whether the new course is better than the old. It is simply to confirm that innovation can take place within the military establishment. Whether it is worthwhile to do it in this manner, whether it will survive over time, only time can tell. There are a few things that I would do differently if I had it to do over:

- As part of the initial blitzkrieg my opening address to the student body was very strong, in fact overly abrasive. This probably encouraged some of their resistance.
- My monthly sessions with the students developed too frequently into gripe sessions. Overall this and other factors led us into a syndrome of constantly taking our own pulse, retrospection. We were paranoicly asking whether the new course was working. The result was that we probably focused more attention on symptoms and problems than we would have noticed otherwise.

- Having it to do over again, I would have fired some of the faculty preemptorily!

Again, the purpose of this piece is not to advertise that which we accomplished in this innovation was good or better, it is simply to contend that innovation can take place under the right circumstances and to attest that while it takes a lot of work and planning, it is fun and a challenge.

USAF Acad. 4/2/74

Innovation - A Case Study

I. Need to think about change

Your discussions of Innovation during these two days - important, timely, because:

- Military must be a dynamic organization (respond to changing world) yet because of its size, bureaucratic framework, and the nature of the human being, change is extremely difficult to make.

You, as managers/operators, must keep military reflective of changing national needs, you must be able to:

- recognize when and what kind of change is needed
- the risks involved
- the benefits which can be realized
- how to systematically make the change you have identified as essential

II. NWC Case Study

Having spent my last two years thinking through and presiding over some fundamental changes at the Naval War College, thought I'd share my experience with you.

Not presented as the definitive formula for effecting change nor even as a good example of how to effect change. Some things turned out well, some not so well - will let you be judge. I discuss it because:

- I can provide 1st hand information about it
- You can analyze it from detached point of view

- Can serve as a basis for exchanging ideas about change
- Might solidify some of the concepts/ideas you have perceived in these two days
- Use as a test case for some of your theories on change/ innovation

III. A Plan of Action

Basically the same for all situations where you can contemplate change:

A + B = C

A = what now exists?

C = what would I like it to be?

B = what is the difference between A and C?

That is what must be done.

In the case of the NWC:

After I received my assignment as President, had about 5 months before taking over.

A. I sought to answer: "What should one teach at a War College?" What does a mid-career military officer need to improve his effectiveness/productivity? (In other words: what are your objectives?"

- Gather ideas - don't evaluate them immediately
  - must be objective, unbiased
  - must be completely open to all ideas, good and bad
  - must seek out all available counsel. (Good ideas sometimes come from unlikely places)
- Asked a small group of respected educators, industrialists, bureaucrats, intellectuals to join me in Washington to discuss what they believed the strengths and weaknesses of the military officer were. (Can also be a means for testing your initial ideas).
- From this meeting I began to see:
  1. Excessive conformity of thought

2. Narrowness of view, e.g., Industry-profit

3. Vast scope worth covering. Facts - impossible. Method of thinking approach.

4. A vague idea of approaching mid-career military education through the three disciplines with which most officers are involved one way or another:

   - strategy
   - management
   - tactics.

They seemed basic to the needs of 0-4's and above. (The danger here is to become set too quickly. Stay open to ideas.)

B. At the same time, was examining the extant WC program. Must influence the form of any new program which might be decided upon. Some examples of the things I found which disturbed me:

- Review of syllabus showed literally hundreds of subjects covered. Every Navy community was represented: ASW, AAW, subs, Intelligence, Oceanography, etc. Course lacked discernable form. Every year added something due to pressures/vogue of the day. How could you cover so many subjects and hope to have an integrated course?

*Decision: Reduce subject diversity; teach a few subjects in depth.

- Course was very current events oriented. Today's international picture. If material is current, it must be time sensitive, ergo value to student must be short.

*Decision: Course should be of permanent value to student. Should bring about a fundamental improvement in officer's capability.

- Over 170 guest speakers during school year.

Fact: you cannot design a course around a guest speaker over whose lecture content you have no control. Never know what the course will be from year to year.

*Decision: Lectures are passive. Learning must be active and content predictable. Must establish high grade in-house capability to teach the course.

- Trips - Student trips (NYC to UN; London to Royal Defense College) were expensive, used up valuable time. How did they enforce what the NWC was trying to teach? Were they really necessary? Could the money/time be better used?

  *Decision: Benefits not worth costs. Time too precious. Cut out the trips. Use money for books.

- Extra curricula Masters degree program (GWU)

- they competed for student time
- if needed to prop us NWC program, then NWC not doing job
- Navy had 3X more MS's in International Affairs than it could use. Why make more?

*Decision: End these programs. Strengthen NWC program. Demand more from students.

C. Decided on course theme: Learn to handle uncertainty.

Basic needs of the 0-4/5:

- Newtonian world/technical specialist, etc.
- Military environment abhors uncertainty but these officers moving into uncertain world.
- To become better decision-makers officers need to learn techniques for handling uncertainty in strategic, managerial, tactical environments.
- Learn new ways of looking at problems - digging out alternatives.
- Learn analytic methods for dealing with complex alternatives.

- Recognize non-quantifiable, non-rational decision factors, e.g., bureaucracy.

This would represent a permanent change of long range benefit to the officer.

IV. Risks: (must be weighed for every decision against expected benefits).

- Not being able to define the new program.
- Not being able to find the right people. Could a team be put together which could implement the program?

- Time against us. To throw out old syllabus, needed a new one. Could we be ready for next school year?
- Could new program be sold to "powers"?
- If new program were a flop, could the NWC's reputation survive?
- Could resistence to change be overcome? (alumni, past Presidents, ex-CNO's, retired flag community, etc.)

V. Helps vs Hindrances:

Admiral Zumwalt gave full support and encouragement to make changes I saw fit - Direct pipeline.

VADM Cagle (head of Ed & Training in USN) also full support.

Over 90% of incumbents at NWC said it couldn't be done in time.

- couldn't get faculty
- couldn't get books/materials
- couldn't get lecturers
- couldn't get printing done
- couldn't mold faculty into team

- Incoming students caught by surprise - expected one thing, got another.

VI. Implementing the Plan:

A. Decided if wanted to accomplish major change, had to use Blitzkreig vice gradual methods. Would be absorbed by bureaucracy over period of several months.

B. Decided necessary to break established hierarchy and put own people in key jobs.

- to get control of program and get it going, appointed 3 academic department heads in whom I had faith. Gradually stripped College directors of assets - this was interim step toward reorganization where academic departments would control faculty assets; Colleges would be admin caretakers of students.
- personally oversaw/approved all conceptual/mechanical/administrative aspects as they developed.

VII. Seeking support/fine tuning:

A. Enlisting support.

1. Active PR program to explain rationale for changes. Much criticism based on incomplete or incorrect information.
2. Personal communication with key flag officers (active & retired), old NWC supporters, other Senior Service School Directors, etc., to explain rationale, enlist support.
3. Open door policy to press.

4. Board of Advisors - addressed specifically (because they had approved the curriculum I was now changing).

B. Fine tuning -

1 Open to all criticisms, suggestions.

- President's Hours
- Course critiques

VIII. Final Reckoning:

A. Final Report.

- again explained rationale
- explained new program
- objective appraisal of accomplishments/problems
- (honest approach, no hard sell)
- future plans
- invited comments

B. Letters to all graduates.

- update on NWC plans

- request for comments on utility of the course they received.

C. Hired outside curriculum evaluator.

D. Second year.

IX. Where did resistance to innovation raise its head?

1. Special interest groups

a) International lawyers

Letters to SecNav

b) Sub - components of Navy

e.g. communications

WWMMCS

c) People who see opportunities to indoctrinate

2. Alumni - Friends of College

Some influential

e.g. GSD attendees

Well placed aides

Some seniors

3. Retired

Rub off of Z opposition

4. Faculty

a) downright opposition

Leaks to press

Disturbing to students

b) pressure for contemporary

c) pressure for completeness

5. Students

Especially contemporary

X. Conclusion:

Steps for this change can be isolated

- assessed what existed

- solicited ideas
- determinated plan of action
- established priority of changes
- picked trusted, key people to implement the change
- agreed with them on what was to be done
- delegated responsibility/authority to proceed
- replaced key people in old organization
- changed organization to support new goals
- explained rationale for actions taken
- sought cooperation and ideas from all during entire process

- finally, after change made, resisted further change until new program well settled

XI. What would I do differently?

- Convocation address (explanation of rationale and program to incoming students) might have been too abrasive. Possibly could have encouraged less resistance to change with a strong yet unabrasive address.

- President's Hours - Gripe sessions - Do people keep finding things which are wrong; do you keep asking what's wrong? Constant pulse taking.
- Fire some faculty peremptorily
- What would you have done differently?
- What elements of the NWC action plan are common to all plans for change?

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To proceed in this direction I asked a small group of respected educators, industrialists, bureaucrats, and naval officers to join me in Washington for a one day conference. This included the Presidents of two of our major universities,

the presidents of two major corporations who do business with the military, five men who held top level positions in the State Department, Department of Defense, and the National Security Council and were now in academic posts, and one junior and one senior naval officer with what I consider to be progressive outlooks. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Zumwalt, agreed to join with us for an hour of this conference. During the conference I asked the participants to discuss what they believe were the strengths and weaknesses of mid-career military officers. Out of this discussion I began to see several objectives for a War College:

1. To reduce the excessive conformity of thought which military officers exhibit by exposing them to a wide diversity of ideas.

2. To counteract the narrowness of viewpoint which many military officers evidence. In particular, the military-industrialist who were present pointed out that in their view military officers were usually out of touch by six months or a year with trends in the country; that they never quite appreciated that the changes they made to their hardware cost money; and they really were oblivious to the fact that industry must make a profit in order to continue servicing them.

3. That there was a vast scope of factual information worth transmitting to these students. Each time some member of the group proposed another subject that was of undoubted value to these students, one of our group kept bringing us back to the issue of why we wanted to transmit that rather than something else. It became readily apparent that it would be impossible to update these officers on all of the factual things with as disparate futures as a War College class would encounter. The idea, therefore, emerged that developing a method of thinking or way of approaching problems was a more suitable objective for mid-career military education.

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In the previous school year there were over 170 outside lecturers who visited the campus. You cannot design a course around such a series of guest speakers over whose lecture content you have no control. You never will know what the course is going to be from year to year under these circumstances. As

a concomitant to this, in addition, the minds of the faculty need not be engaged under these circumstances. The faculty were in fact, constructing curricula, and then recruiting and administering the visitor who would teach those curricula. The end result was a dearth of intellectual stimuli on the campus inself.

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Decision: In view of the questionableness of this program and yet its popularity, the decision was made to conduct a controlled experiment during the first year of the new program. One of the two colleges would be permitted to continue the associated degree program, while the other would not. At the same time, the Naval War College program, in both colleges, would be strengthened and made more demanding for the students. At the end of this experimentation period, it was clear that only exceptional students could meet the demands of both courses. Unfortunately, there was no way to select those who could carry both work loads at the beginning of the year when it was necessary to select these students.

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What, though, were the risks of innovating in this abrupt a manner? Certainly any innovator must weigh his expected risks against the expected benefits. I saw the following:

- There was clear danger that we would not be able to define the new program in time.

- There was a danger that we would not be able to find the right people to teach the new program. Could we actually put a team together which would implement it on such a short order?

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In making the innovation happen, perhaps the most critical decision was whether to proceed in a gradual and piecemeal fashion or to do it in what I would term a blitzkrieg manner. I decided that if we wanted to accomplish a major change that we had to use the Blitzkrieg approach rather than a gradual one. I felt that I would be absorbed by the educational bureaucracy of Newport if we attempted to introduce the program over a period of time. I thought the program would consequently become watered down. There would be a real danger of having the worst of both possible worlds. This decision to make a frontal approach in a Blitzkrieg manner is certainly one of the most controversial that I had to take. It inexorably led to certain other actions on my part. One of these was a decision to break down the established heirachy and organization. I did this both to get my own people into the key jobs and to get control of the program. The actual technique was to shift from an organization of the College into two subdivisions, the senior course and the junior course, with a naval officer in charge of each. Instead we established three academic departments with control over all of the teaching resources. We gradually stripped the two college directors

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Finally, there was opposition from within the student body themselves. This can hardly be blamed on them or unanticipated. Any precipitate change in direction from what a student expected when he received his orders to the War College was naturally viewed with suspicion. Within the students there was particular pressure to place more emphasis on the contemporary scene. These students are very much concerned with their next assignment and their performance in that assignment. We employed several techniques to understand and minimize this student opposition if possible. Once a month, I met with any students who would like to express their opinions on the course or any other subject. We distributed questionnaires at the end of each sub-section of the course and at the end of the year. I read each of these carefully and responded in writing to all of the end-of-the-course questionnaires. I wrote personally to the students six months after they graduated. I explained the changes we had made as a result of their questionnaires and solicited further comments. As these comments have come in

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What, then, have been the results? It is unequivocal that the blitzkrieg has succeeded. The new course is in effect. It is working. It is working well. The second crop of students are particularly enthusiastic about it, having arrived under no misapprehension as to what they could expect. This is not to make an evaluation on whether the new course is better than the old. It is simply to confirm that innovation can take place within the military establishment. Whether it is worthwhile to do it in this manner, whether it will survive over time, only time can tell. There are a few things that I would do differently if I had it to do over:

- As part of the initial blitzkrieg my opening address to the student body was very strong, in fact overly abrasive. This probably encouraged some of their resistance.
- My monthly sessions with the students developed too frequently into gripe sessions. Overall this and other factors led us into a syndrome of constantly taking our own pulse, retrospection. We were paranoicly asking whether the new course was working. The result was that we probably focused more attention on symptoms and problems than we would have noticed otherwise.

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Again, the purpose of this piece is not to advertise that which we accomplished in this innovation was good or better, it is simply to contend that innovation can take place under the right circumstances and to attest that while it takes a lot of work and planning, it is fun and a challenge.

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION AT THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

1972-1974

A CASE STUDY

The purpose of this paper is to describe the process of innovation and education at the Naval War College from 1972 to 1974. It is not to support or advertise what was done, but rather to examine how it was done, what opposition was encountered and what lessons were learned.

After I received my assignment as President of the Naval War College in February 1972, I had about 5 months to prepare myself for these new responsibilities before actually assuming them. (For four of those months I did this as an off duty function.) The first question I sought to answer was "What should one teach at a War College?" In short, what does a mid-career military officer need to learn in order to improve his effectiveness and productivity. In essence, this really amounted to asking the question, "What is the objective in having a War College?"

To proceed in this direction I asked a small group of respected educators, industrialists, bureaucrats, and naval officers to join me in Washington for a one day conference. This included the Presidents of two of our major universities,

the presidents of two major corporations who do business with the military, five men who held top level positions in the State Department, Department of Defense, and the National Security Council and were now in academic posts, and one junior and one senior naval officer with what I consider to be progressive outlooks. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Zumwalt, agreed to join with us for an hour of this conference. During the conference I asked the participants to discuss what they believe were the strengths and weaknesses of mid-career military officers. Out of this discussion I began to see several objectives for a War College:

1. To reduce the excessive conformity of thought which military officers exhibit by exposing them to a wide diversity of ideas.

2. To counteract the narrowness of viewpoint which many military officers evidence. In particular, the military-industrialist who were present pointed out that in their view military officers were usually out of touch by six months or a year with trends in the country; that they never quite appreciated that the changes they made to their hardware cost money; and they really were oblivious to the fact that industry must make a profit in order to continue servicing them.

3. That there was a vast scope of factual information worth transmitting to these students. Each time some member of the group proposed another subject that was of undoubted value to these students, one of our group kept bringing us back to the issue of why we wanted to transmit that rather than something else. It became readily apparent that it would be impossible to update these officers on all of the factual things with as disparate futures as a War College class would encounter. The idea, therefore, emerged that developing a method of thinking or way of approaching problems was a more suitable objective for mid-career military education.

4. Overall the first step in any innovation appears to me to be establishment of one's objectives and this conference clearly helped me to set such an objective.

A second step in innovation is to assess what the existing situation is, and then to match that against the objective. In taking a thorough look at the War College program in existance I found the following points which did not appear to be in line with the basic objective I had established:

1. A review of the syllabus showed that there were literally hundreds of subjects covered. Every Navy community was represented: Anti-submarine warfare, anti-air warfare, submarines,

intelligence, oceanography, etc. I attributed this to historical circumstance. Prior to World War II the objective of the Naval War College was to teach officers how to beat the Japanese fleet. In the immediate post WW II era the entire military establishment became increasingly aware of the interaction between military considerations and diplomatic and political. The scope of the War College program was extended to include substantial emphasis on international relations. Beyond that, every year from then on something new was added to the curriculum due to the pressures or the vogue of the day. There came a time when Balance of Payments was now something of interest to the military; there came a time when the planning programming and budgeting system was the latest innovation; there came a time when multi-polarity was replacing bi-polarity as the current terminology; etc. It appeared to me that each time a new topic such as these was added to the curriculum only a smaller slice of something was removed. The result was a course constructed by accretion and one that lacked discernable form. There was really no hope that so many subjects could be covered in an adequate manner.

• Decision: Therefore, it appeared to me that we should reduce the diversity of subject matter and teach a fewer number of subjects but teach them each in depth. Basically this required

a commitment to leaving things out of the curriculum that would be worth the students studying. It would take a conscious deliberate and sutbborn policy to do this.

Another characteristic of the existing course is that it was very much oriented towards current events. The emphasis on international relations had developed into a concern for covering the contemporary international picture. This included the outlook and prospects for United States foreign policy with regard to various areas of the world and the particular conditions extant in various countries and areas. The problem with this approach is that if the material were in fact current it must also be time sensitive. Therefore the value to student would appear to be short lived.

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EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION AT THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

1972-1974

A CASE STUDY

The purpose of this paper is to describe the process of innovation and education at the Naval War College from 1972 to 1974. It is not to support or advertise what was done, but rather to examine how it was done, what opposition was encountered and what lessons were learned.

After I received my assignment as President of the Naval War College in February 1972, I had about 5 months to prepare myself for these new responsibilities before actually assuming them. (For four of those months I did this as an off duty function.) The first question I sought to answer was "What should one teach at a War College?" In short, what does a mid-career military officer need to learn in order to improve his effectiveness and productivity. In essence, this really amounted to asking the question, "What is the objective in having a War College?"

To proceed in this direction I asked a small group of respected educators, industrialists, bureaucrats, and naval officers to join me in Washington for a one day conference. This included the Presidents of two of our major universities,

the presidents of two major corporations who do business with the military, five men who held top level positions in the State Department, Department of Defense, and the National Security Council and were now in academic posts, and one junior and one senior naval officer with what I consider to be progressive outlooks. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Zumwalt, agreed to join with us for an hour of this conference. During the conference I asked the participants to discuss what they believe were the strengths and weaknesses of mid-career military officers. Out of this discussion I began to see several objectives for a War College:

1. To reduce the excessive conformity of thought which military officers exhibit by exposing them to a wide diversity of ideas.

2. To counteract the narrowness of viewpoint which many military officers evidence. In particular, the military-industrialist who were present pointed out that in their view military officers were usually out of touch by six months or a year with trends in the country; that they never quite appreciated that the changes they made to their hardware cost money; and they really were oblivious to the fact that industry must make a profit in order to continue servicing them.

3. That there was a vast scope of factual information worth transmitting to these students. Each time some member of the group proposed another subject that was of undoubted value to these students, one of our group kept bringing us back to the issue of why we wanted to transmit that rather than something else. It became readily apparent that it would be impossible to update these officers on all of the factual things with as disparate futures as a War College class would encounter. The idea, therefore, emerged that developing a method of thinking or way of approaching problems was a more suitable objective for mid-career military education.

4. Overall the first step in any innovation appears to me to be establishment of one's objectives and this conference clearly helped me to set such an objective.

A second step in innovation is to assess what the existing situation is, and then to match that against the objective. In taking a thorough look at the War College program in existance I found the following points which did not appear to be in line with the basic objective I had established:

1. A review of the syllabus showed that there were literally hundreds of subjects covered. Every Navy community was represented: Anti-submarine warfare, anti-air warfare, submarines,

intelligence, oceanography, etc. I attributed this to historical circumstance. Prior to World War II the objective of the Naval War College was to teach officers how to beat the Japanese fleet. In the immediate post WW II era the entire military establishment became increasingly aware of the interaction between military considerations and diplomatic and political. The scope of the War College program was extended to include substantial emphasis on international relations. Beyond that, every year from then on something new was added to the curriculum due to the pressures or the vogue of the day. There came a time when Balance of Payments was now something of interest to the military; there came a time when the planning programming and budgeting system was the latest innovation; there came a time when multi-polarity was replacing bi-polarity as the current terminology; etc. It appeared to me that each time a new topic such as these was added to the curriculum only a smaller slice of something was removed. The result was a course constructed by accretion and one that lacked discernable form. There was really no hope that so many subjects could be covered in an adequate manner.

• Decision: Therefore, it appeared to me that we should reduce the diversity of subject matter and teach a fewer number of subjects but teach them each in depth. Basically this required

a commitment to leaving things out of the curriculum that would be worth the students studying. It would take a conscious deliberate and sutbborn policy to do this.

Another characteristic of the existing course is that it was very much oriented towards current events. The emphasis on international relations had developed into a concern for covering the contemporary international picture. This included the outlook and prospects for United States foreign policy with regard to various areas of the world and the particular conditions extant in various countries and areas. The problem with this approach is that if the material were in fact current it must also be time sensitive. Therefore the value to student would appear to be short lived.

Decision: This led to a concept of constructing a course that would be of more permanent value to the student, a course that should bring about a fundamental improvement in the officer's capability rather than a one time updating. This again would require a deliberate and stubborn policy of resisting pressures and tendencies to concentrate on items of near term value.

In the previous school year there were over 170 outside lecturers who visited the campus. You cannot design a course around such a series of guest speakers over whose lecture content you have no control. You never will know what the course is going to be from year to year under these circumstances. As

a concomitant to this, in addition, the minds of the faculty need not be engaged under these circumstances. The faculty were in fact, constructing curricula, and then recruiting and administering the visitor who would teach those curricula. The end result was a dearth of intellectual stimuli on the campus inself.

Decision: If the basic objective is to improve the officer's thinking process, the stress on lectures should be reduced in favor of more reading and writing on the part of the individual student. Concomitantly, we must establish a high grade in-house capability to teach.

The existing program included several field trips for the students. One of these was to the United Nations in New York, and another to the Royal College of Defence Studies in London. Each of these was expensive in both dollars and time. It was not clear to me why either the United Nations or Great Britain were particular subjects on which to focus at this particular time and in this particular course. How did they reinforce what the War College was attempting to teach? Were they really necessary, or could the time and money be better employed in other ways?

Decision: The benefits of field trips did not appear to be worth the cost particularly in the student's time. They were to be eliminated and the money employed for purchasing books which the students would utilize and then retain.

There was an extracurricular master's degree program in association with George Washington University. This program clearly competed for the time of those students who enrolled in it (approximately 50% of the student body). There was little doubt that when faced by a conflict between two masters, the student opted to serve the one who granted a sheepskin. If this George Washington program was needed to prop up the Naval War College academic program, then the Naval War College was not doing its job, particularly for the 50% of the students who were not enrolled in the George Washington exercise. Beyond all this, the Navy has about three times as many officers with Master's degrees in International Affairs as it has reason to employ. The question arose as to why we were encouraging more.

Decision: In view of the questionableness of this program and yet its popularity, the decision was made to conduct a controlled experiment during the first year of the new program. One of the two colleges would be permitted to continue the associated degree program, while the other would not. At the same time, the Naval War College program, in both colleges, would be strengthened and made more demanding for the students. At the end of this experimentation period, it was clear that only exceptional students could meet the demands of both courses. Unfortunately, there was no way to select those who could carry both work loads at the beginning of the year when it was necessary to select these students.

The top officers in their respective year groups were not clamoring to be assigned to the Naval War College. Instead they were looking for "career-enhancing" assignments, usually in the Washington arena.

• Decision: It would be necessary to encourage the Bureau of Naval Personnel to assign its better officers to the War College. This did not appear, however, to be a long term solution. Only by making the course more attractive so that it would "pull" officers to it could we expect to attract the better officers over time. It appeared that the "attractiveness" of the present course was in some degree founded on a lack of academic pressure. This presented the challenge do me of making the course more academically demanding and yet more attractive to the individual student. Clearly this meant that the course had to have a discernable payoff in terms of improved capability for performance in the individual officer.

Having established an objective and basic procedures, the next step in innovation was to develop a curriculum to fulfil these requirements. I attempted this gradually over the five month period through conferences with educators, military officer, and people familiar with the bureaucratic process in the Department of Defense. It appeared to me that naval officers at mid-career needed enhanced improvement of their ability to approach a problem in three distinct areas: Broad national strategy; the allocation of resources in defense; and the

employment of naval forces tactically. Since the basic objective was to improve methods of approaching problems and making decisions, I opted to concentrate on a case study approach. The objective here was to get away from the excessive conformity of thought and narrowness of viewpoint by utilizing case studies that would bring out numerous equally "correct" solutions to any given problem. To avoid the pitfalls of emphasis on contemporary data, I decided to emphasize the historical approach to these case studies. In the case of strategy this might have meant going as far back as Thucydides and looking at various cases in strategic decision making. In resource allocation or defense economics it meant looking at recent, but generally completed, decisions in the assignment of dollars or manpower. In tactics it meant looking at largely hypothetical cases with some historical accent also. We were able to shape-up the case studies in strategy before I reported aboard and even to order many of the textbooks. Only the board shape of the Defense Economics course had evolved, and even less of the Tactics course. Thus the decision was made to phase in the new program sequentially with the Strategy course commencing in September, the Defense Economics course in December, and the Tactics course in April.

What, though, were the risks of innovating in this abrupt a manner? Certainly any innovator must weigh his expected risks against the expected benefits. I saw the following:

- There was clear danger that we would not be able to define the new program in time.

- There was a danger that we would not be able to find the right people to teach the new program. Could we actually put a team together which would implement it on such a short order?

- Would we be able to sell the new program to the "powers that be"?

- What were the dangers if the new program were a flop? Could the Naval War College's reputation survive?

Ninety percent of the incumbents at the War College advised me that it could not be done in time: We could not get the faculty; we could not get the books and materials that would be required; we could not get the lecturers committed; we could not get the printing done; we could not mold the faculty into a team properly etc. At the same time I looked at two of the plusses that I had going for us. One was that Admiral Zumwalt had given me his full support and encouragement to make the changes I saw fit. I would like to add that he not only did this in advance of my arrival at the War College, but throughout the first year of this new experiment supported the program unstintingly. I am well aware the he received numerous phone calls, letters, and other forms of complaint as to what I was doing. During that year he never passed any of these to me to prepare the response or to justify my position. He shouldered that burden entirely himself, and shielded me as much as was humanly possible from such opposition.

Secondly, my immediate superior, Vice Admiral Chris Cagle, Chief of Naval Education and Training also gave me his total support including the authority to deal directly with Admiral Zumwalt on matters of educational substance. Both of these forms of support were utterly essential to the outcome.

In making the innovation happen, perhaps the most critical decision was whether to proceed in a gradual and piecemeal fashion or to do it in what I would term a blitzkrieg manner. I decided that if we wanted to accomplish a major change that we had to use the Blitzkrieg approach rather than a gradual one. I felt that I would be absorbed by the educational bureaucracy of Newport if we attempted to introduce the program over a period of time. I thought the program would consequently become watered down. There would be a real danger of having the worst of both possible worlds. This decision to make a frontal approach in a Blitzkrieg manner is certainly one of the most controversial that I had to take. It inexorably led to certain other actions on my part. One of these was a decision to break down the established heirachy and organization. I did this both to get my own people into the key jobs and to get control of the program. The actual technique was to shift from an organization of the College into two subdivisions, the senior course and the junior course, with a naval officer in charge of each. Instead we established three academic departments with control over all of the teaching resources. We gradually stripped the two college directors

of their assets and turned their functions into the equivalent of being Deans of Students. The organization is actually more logical and in line with normal academic procedures. I took it, however, not for organizational efficiency, but in order to establish control over the new program. It just did not appear feasible to get the same "old dogs" to perform "new tricks" in the same organizational environment as before.

Secondly, the blitzkrieg approach almost forced me into more personal control over the new program than was desirable. I found it necessary to oversee and to approve all conception mechnical and administrative aspects as they developed. Initially this may have been necessary and satisfactory in the long run one of the great strengths of the new program was in allowing the faculty to gain a sense of responsibility and stake in the program.

Thirdly, the blitzkrieg approach naturally attracted attention not only in the Navy but in the other military services. We were therefore pushed into an active public relations program to explain our rational for the changes. Much of the criticisms we received was based on incomplete or incorrect information. I spend a great deal of time on personal communication with key flag officers both active and retired, previous Naval War College supporters and many others. We established an open door policy with the press to encourage a fair look at what we are doing. Due to the amount of resistance that developed, it appeared to me that being totally forthright, and opening

the doors to show what we were doing, would be the only way to eliminate doubt and suspicion in the long run.

Where did these resistances come from? Basically there were five different groupings:

o There were special interest groups. Most of these felt that their particular area of expertise or concern was being neglected. For instance, quite a few civilian international lawyers took exception to the fact that "International Law Week" was disestablished. International Law was factured into the case studies instead, loosing its individual identification. It also terminated the tradition of bringing a series of international lawyers to the campus for International Law Week. These lawyers called upon the Secretary of the Navy; wrote the Secretary of the Navy and took other steps to decry the new program without so much as preparing their case by asking us what we were doing instead. The only way to counter this was to be patient, to meet with as many of these people as I could, and to write to as many as we could. There were subcomponents of the Navy who felt that there particular area of concern was also being neglected. Throughout the entire two years here I have found it necessary about once a quarter to respond to a letter from a 3 or 4 star flag or general officer as to why his particular area is not being specifically covered by a separate course of study. It is amazing how many people in the military look at the 450 military officers who are assembled for 10 months

at the War College and view this as a great opportunity to indoctrinate them into one thing or another.

o There were of course alumni and friends of the War College who regreted seeing any substantial change. Some of these were influential civilians who advise and support top people in the Navy. Some were junior officers that were placed in spots as executive assistants and military aides. Some, of course, more senior officers, probably some of the 170 who are no longer inivted to lecture at the War College. About all we could do with this opposition was again to be patient, to give a little here and there, and to ride it out. Basically I hoped that as our graduates began to go back to the fleet they would carry the message with them that the course was beneficial. Beyond that, we developed the Annual Report which was an effort to explain the new program and we attempted to insure distribution of this to the principal opponents, as well as the friends of the new program.

There was considerable opposition from the Retired Flag Officer community. In essence, I diagnosed this as being more opposition to Admiral Zumwalt and not necessarily to the program itself. I tried to communicate with those who were most skeptical. Beyond that, there was little we could do, besides again being patient.

There was considerable opposition within the faculty of the War College itself. This ranged from downright opposition and attempts to sabotage the program to expres-

sions of discontent that were very disturbing to the students. The oppostion focused in two areas that easily could have been anticipated. First was the pressure for more contemporary focus and then pressure for more completeness in what we were doing. We worked around this opposition in part by shuffling people into different jobs where they were not as close to the students.

Finally, there was opposition from within the student body themselves. This can hardly be blamed on them or unanticipated. Any precipitate change in direction from what a student expected when he received his orders to the War College was naturally viewed with suspicion. Within the students there was particular pressure to place more emphasis on the contemporary scene. These students are very much concerned with their next assignment and their performance in that assignment. We employed several techniques to understand and minimize this student opposition if possible. Once a month, I met with any students who would like to express their opinions on the course or any other subject. We distributed questionnaires at the end of each sub-section of the course and at the end of the year. I read each of these carefully and responded in writing to all of the end-of-the-course questionnaires. I wrote personally to the students six months after they graduated. I explained the changes we had made as a result of their questionnaires and solicited further comments. As these comments have come in

we have been pleased to note that quite a few of them expressed a feeling that the course is proving of value to them though they were skeptical or opposed to the program when they graduated.

What, then, have been the results? It is unequivocal that the blitzkrieg has succeeded. The new course is in effect. It is working. It is working well. The second crop of students are particularly enthusiastic about it, having arrived under no misapprehension as to what they could expect. This is not to make an evaluation on whether the new course is better than the old. It is simply to confirm that innovation can take place within the military establishment. Whether it is worthwhile to do it in this manner, whether it will survive over time, only time can tell. There are a few things that I would do differently if I had it to do over:

- As part of the initial blitzkrieg my opening address to the student body was very strong, in fact overly abrasive. This probably encouraged some of their resistance.

- My monthly sessions with the students developed too frequently into gripe sessions. Overall this and other factors led us into a syndrome of constantly taking our own pulse, retrospection. We were paranoicly asking whether the new course was working. The result was that we probably focused more attention on symptoms and problems than we would have noticed otherwise.

- Having it to do over again, I would have fired some of the faculty preemptorily!

Again, the purpose of this piece is not to advertise that which we accomplished in this innovation was good or better, it is simply to contend that innovation can take place under the right circumstances and to attest that while it takes a lot of work and planning, it is fun and a challenge.